



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

TITLE Further evidence submitted by the Welsh Government to the Commission on Devolution in Wales

DATE 18 June 2013

BY First Minister

The Welsh Government has submitted further written evidence to the Commission on Devolution in Wales (the Commission) in respect of Part II of its remit dealing with the powers of the National Assembly. The evidence responds to the Commission's request for further information about how the devolution settlement is working in practice, with particular regard to the inter-governmental relations between the Welsh Government and UK Government departments. It confirms that the Welsh Government's working relationships with the UK Government are professional, business-like, constructive, numerous, complex and sometimes frustrating. The full text of the Government's evidence is attached.

The Government's evidence supports the following points, using relevant case studies that focus on issues that relate directly to the devolution settlement and where inter-governmental relations work at the boundaries of the settlement:

- the extent of bilateral engagement between Welsh Government and UK Government Ministers is business-driven and is very extensive on some issues, but in other areas, where matters are largely devolved, the need to engage may be considerably less;
- there are many areas where there is extensive engagement with the UK Government in the context of overlapping powers or differing policies and priorities;
- there are many good examples of effective joint working between the Welsh Government and UK Government departments;
- UK Government communications can be a major issue and there are occasions when the UK Government makes announcements that relate primarily to England, but have significant implications for Wales, without prior consultation;
- legislation is a key focus of inter-governmental communication, with the need for early and ongoing engagement between officials to resolve issues in many UK Bills that contain provisions requiring the agreement of the Assembly through

Legislative Consent Motions and many Welsh Government Bills requiring UK Government consents or other engagement with the UK Government, and to meet Assembly and Parliamentary timetables;

- the complexities around the boundaries of the devolution settlement can hold up Welsh Government legislation, with delays sometimes caused by challenges in resolving the UK Government's position across Whitehall departments;
- the implications for the devolved administrations of some very significant UK Government reforms are not always factored in to UK Government planning at a sufficiently strategic level and some changes are imposing very significant unfunded costs on the Welsh Government, to the detriment of devolved services.

I will arrange for copies of the evidence to be placed in the Assembly Library.